

In this world of plenty, of marvelous scientific advances, of growing freedoms, we cannot ignore the tragedy of millions who are excluded from the blessings we enjoy. There is a moral imperative to be concerned and to act. It is simply wrong for a child anywhere in the world to suffer the crippling effects of malnutrition. It is wrong—even outrageous—that more than 800 million people, 14% of the human race, are malnourished, many near starvation. It is wrong to accept as “unavoidable” the millions of hungry people we read about or see on TV. It is wrong to let politics and ideology interfere with helping the hungry, especially children. When criticized for helping the communist government of North Korea establish child-feeding programs in that drought-stricken country, Catherine Bertini, who is head of the World Food Program replied, “I can’t tell a hungry 5-year-old boy that we can’t feed him because we don’t like the politics of his country.”

But beyond that, it is in our self-interest to end hunger. After all, we live in one world. Rich and poor alike, we breathe the same air; we share a global economy. Killers like AIDS and environmental calamities and other threats to health don’t stop at national borders. The chaos associated with political instability rooted in poverty and desperation is rarely contained within a single country.

Earlier this year, when President Clinton asked me to be the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations food and agriculture agencies in Rome, I readily accepted because of my lifelong interest in agricultural matters and in solving the problem of hunger. At the agency, I work with such organizations as the Food and Agriculture Organization, which is headed by Senegalese agricultural authority Jacques Diouf; the World Food Program, directed by Bertini, an American, and the International Fund for Agriculture Development, under the direction of Fawzi al Sultan, a Kuwaiti banker. Our common purpose, articulated at the World Food Summit hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization in November 1996, is to reduce hunger by promoting an adequate supply and distribution of food in the world.

This plan, endorsed by all 186 nations represented at the summit, has the practical and achievable goal of reducing by half the number of hungry people in the world by 2015. Consider these facts:

Over the past 50 years, infant and child death rates in the developing world have been reduced by 50% and health conditions around the world have improved more during this period than in all previous human history.

In the past three decades, agricultural production techniques, developed through the internationally supported system of research centers, enabled a “green revolution” in many countries. Improved seed and associated break-throughs in agricultural practices resulted in the most dramatic increase in crop yields in the history of mankind, allowing nations like India and Bangladesh, which in the early 1960s and mid-1970s, respectively, were kept alive through outside food assistance, to become nearly food self-sufficient.

The United States played a leading role in alleviating hunger, especially in the period immediately following World War II, by encouraging the international community to set in place the institutions and methods to address the issue. As prosperity spread across Europe and other parts of the world, more nations have shared in the task of solving the problems of food insecurity.

The Food and Agriculture Organization is providing technical assistance in a variety of ways: establishing productivity-enhancing

technology such as user-managed, small scale irrigation schemes; eradicating and controlling pests like desert locust that threaten food security for millions of people living in a swath extending from the Red Sea to West Africa; monitoring crop conditions around the world to provide early warning of food supply difficulties and disasters; and conserving scarce food resources such as fisheries and biodiversity to protect future food security.

The World Food Program that is meeting emergency food needs in Rwanda, North Korea, Sudan and the Horn of Africa has saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Also, the program often plays a development role in nonemergency situations characterized by chronic hunger and malnutrition, using “food for work” to enable thousands of communities to build schools, improve community water systems and expand other basic infrastructure. And the International Fund for Agricultural Development, established only 20 years ago, provides development loans for addressing the basic needs of small farmers and poor rural communities. The agency was the first to provide funds to the now spectacularly successful Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which created a model for channeling microcredit to the very poor. The agency is currently supporting similar grassroots microcredit models in West Africa.

Obviously, progress in ending world hunger can be greatly advanced by progress in other related problem areas, including better family planning to restrain excessive population growth. There must also be continuing efforts to halt the bloody and disruptive political and military conflicts in developing countries that drive multitudes of people from their homes, fields and jobs.

Reaching the goal adopted at the World Food Summit, to reduce the number of undernourished people by one-half in the next 17 years, is beyond the capacity of any single country or organization. It will require the effort of many international organizations and national governments and the help of private voluntary organizations, such as CARE, Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Services and the United Jewish Appeal.

The target beneficiaries themselves have a key role to play, because reducing hunger and achieving security is much more than simply distributing food aid. It’s about developing concerned and capable government leadership responsive to citizens. It’s about having sound economic policies and educating people. It’s about reducing disease and improving public health. It’s about improving cultivation practices and making production tools, including rural credit, available. It’s about conserving forests, fisheries, genetic resources and biodiversity. It’s about establishing effective markets. And it’s about having essential infrastructure including farm-to-market roads.

These difficult but achievable soil motivate the U.N. food and agricultural agencies in Rome as they assist communities and nations to eliminate hunger and to establish the basis for sustained productivity. This work requires technical knowledge, cultural sensitivity, organizational development skills, a realistic appreciation for market incentives and a good measure of altruistic motivation.

During a recent trip to Egypt, I visited a rural community in the desert between Cairo and Alexandria. Here, the government has settled about 15,000 families on so-called “new lands.” To prepare these lands for production with water diverted from the Nile River, the settler families undertake the task of desalinating the soil, a repeated process of tilling, flooding and draining that typically takes more than three years. In ad-

dition, an array of basic village facilities and irrigation infrastructure has to be built. The work required of the settlers is backbreaking. But also needed are support, guidance and money, requirements being fulfilled by a collaborative effort of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which is financing the nonlabor cost of the on-farm infrastructure; the World Food Program, which is supplementing the family diets until the fields come into production, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, which helps monitor and guide the technical aspects involved in getting the land fit for production.

This is the kind of investment activity that leads to sustained food security. This is the kind of activity that Americans and citizens in other donor countries support.

I am proud of the tradition of the people of the United States to give a helping hand to the hungry and to those in need. I am proud of the record of foreign assistance that the United States has provided to nations to undertake essential economic development initiatives; it has paid dividends to both the recipient countries and to us. Likewise, I am proud of the pivotal role that the United States has played in making the system of United Nations agencies strong and effective. It saddens me that the United States is today delinquent in paying what it owes to the U.N., including to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the family of multilateral organizations that plays such a key role in eliminating hunger.

There are no easy solutions to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in our world. However, eliminating hunger is the place to start and should be our priority. The need is evident. The methods are known. The means can be made available.

#### TRIBUTE TO A GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD RECIPIENT

#### HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 1998*

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute two outstanding young women who have been honored with the Girl Scout Gold Award by Farthest North Girl Scout Council in Fairbanks, Alaska. They are: Erin Shaw and Rachel Shaw.

They are being honored for earning the highest achievement award in United States Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning, and personal development. The award can be earned by young women aged 14 through 17, or in grades 9 through 12.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.5 million girls, has awarded more than 20,000 Girl Scout Gold Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the Gold Award program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, and the Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the Senior Girl Scout and is carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

As members of Farthest North Girl Scout Council, Erin and Rachel Shaw began working

toward the Girl Scout Gold Award in the late spring of 1998. They completed their project in the areas of leadership and community service by developing their communication skills and then working with the hearing impaired community. They used these skills to reach out to various parts of the community. They used their skills to plan and implement a deaf community carnival for people with hearing impairments and their families, as well as students who were learning sign language. I believe they should receive the public recognition due them for this significant service to their community and their country.

#### CPSC ON THE FAST TRACK

#### HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 1998*

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of my colleagues the outstanding work being done by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The Commission has put into effect an innovative program, under which it works cooperatively with industry to get hazardous products off store shelves within days, instead of the weeks and months that it traditionally takes to negotiate a recall. Everyone wins under this new system—especially the consumer, who is protected from possible injury.

This Fast-Track Product Recall Program was recently honored with a 1998 Innovations in American Government Award. The CPSC

was one of three federal government winners of the \$100,000 award this year. These awards are funded by the Ford Foundation, and administered by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

The CPSC's award-winning program was highlighted in the December 1998 edition of Government Executive magazine, and I would like to submit this article for the RECORD.

[From Government Executive, Dec. 1998]

#### A FAST TRACK TO CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY—QUICK RECALL OF FAULTY PRODUCTS SERVES EVERYONE

FAST-TRACK PRODUCT RECALL PROGRAM U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

When a consumer product could hurt or even kill somebody, the traditional regulatory response is understandable: to find fault and then decide how to punish the manufacturer. But there's a new attitude at the Consumer Product Safety Commission—charged with monitoring consumer product safety nationwide: When a product has the potential to hurt or even kill somebody, the preferred course is to work with the manufacturer to get that product off the market fast. That is the aim of the Fast-Track Product Recall Program, launched as a six-month pilot in July 1995.

With 21,400 deaths and 29 million injuries annually due to faulty consumer products, the issue of unsafe products is not a small one. And the size of the problem only compounded the frustration of CPSC staff over how long it traditionally took to implement a recall—time delays exacerbated by the frequently adversarial nature of the process.

And so staff in the Commission's Office of Compliance decided to try a new tack. In dis-

cussions with companies, staff learned two things: The recall process itself—which frequently called for lengthy testing and investigations—sometimes got in the way of rapid recall. More serious, though, was that in initiating a recall, the Commission would in every case make a "preliminary determination" of a product defect in order to justify the recall. Because such "PDs," as they were called, implied guilt, companies afraid of liability suits frequently fought them as a matter of course. That, too, only served to drag out the process.

To avoid all that, the Commission and manufacturers negotiated a trade. If companies would volunteer for fast-track, the Commission would sidestep much of the process involved in initiating a recall, including the preliminary determination.

The new avenue for recalls caught on quickly. Since the program was launched (it became permanent in March 1997), nearly half of all recalls are fast-tracked. In 1996, 103 fast-track recalls were initiated within an average of 10 days; in 1997, 105 recalls were initiated within an average of 17 days. While a week may seem like a long time for some defective product to stay on the shelves, it is a vast improvement over the weeks or months that it takes to initiate a recall under the traditional system.

Not only is the new system faster, it also appears to be more effective. The percentage of products returned by consumers for repair or replacement has averaged over 60 percent for fast-track, compared with 30 percent under the traditional process. And the new system is very cost-effective. Although nearly half of all recalls are now fast-tracked, they account for only 10 percent of the Commission's \$16.5 million compliance budget.